New Jersey
Language Arts Literacy Curriculum Framework

Chapter 4

Vignettes for Language Arts Literacy

VIGNETTES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Experiences in the classroom are the substance of stories, stories that illuminate what children know and can do and what teachers do in turn to guide students to new levels of understanding and proficiency. The vignettes on the following pages present just these kinds of stories and illustrate how skilled teachers integrate the individual language arts literacy standards and their indicators into a single, well-balanced lesson or unit.

The vignettes, which are grouped by grade level (elementary, middle, and secondary), represent the diverse instructional experiences that students at these levels need in order to develop literacy skills and behaviors. By instinct, we turn to those vignettes that pertain directly to our educational responsibilities. Yet, we need to read all the vignettes; the stories at the other grade levels can contribute to our understanding. As teachers, we need to know what prior experiences students bring to the classroom and to anticipate what curriculum goals will form our students' future educational program.

We should be able to find our own teaching practices reflected in some vignettes and instructional approaches that we do not use in others. The variety provides a valuable model of the many ways we help students develop and enhance their literacy skills. We need to approach each vignette with the questions, "What is there here that I can use with my students? What material am I using that will lend itself to this instructional approach? How might the strategies and techniques described in this vignette improve my students' learning?"

The format of the vignettes is designed to help teachers and administrators focus on key aspects of instructional planning and implementation. Each vignette addresses specific standards and their progress indicators for language arts literacy and cross-content workplace readiness. These focus indicators are identified in the box at the beginning of each vignette. The left-hand column presents the story; the right-hand column contains annotations or glosses that give the rationale for the specific teaching techniques and student behaviors described in the vignette. Following each vignette are three additional components: assessment possibilities for the learning experience conveyed in the story; questions for teacher reflection about the learning experience; and possible extensions that teachers could use to enhance students' literacy development. We can use these components as the basis for discussion with colleagues and for personal reflection.

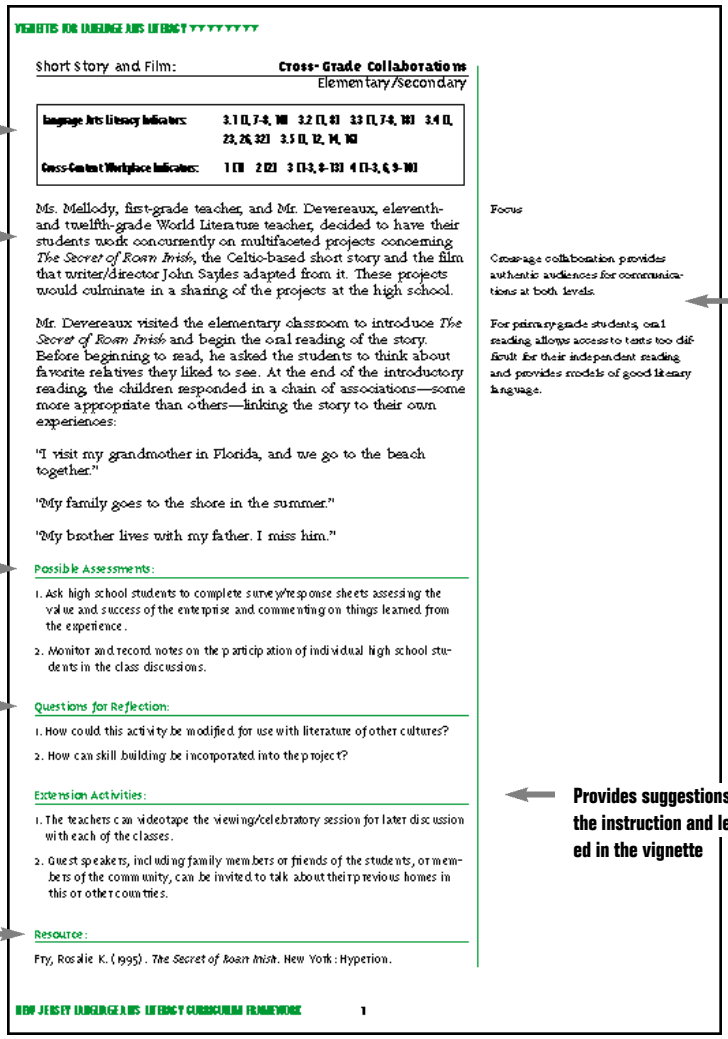
In live classrooms, a vibrant curriculum addresses many of the indicators identified in the language arts literacy and cross-content workplace readiness standards. The vignettes in this chapter similarly encompass several standards and multiple indicators in these two critical areas. The matrix on pages 42–44 provides a summary of those indicators most clearly addressed in each story or vignette. You may see the potential for others.

No one vignette is meant to provide a comprehensive narrative of teaching and learning. Rather, it is in the collection of stories that we see the broad reach of an educational program grounded in the standards. The stories that follow the matrix are based on actual instructional approaches used by New Jersey educators in their classrooms. These vignettes are presented with profound respect for the children and regard for their future as literate citizens.

MATRIX OF STANDARDS AND INDICATORS ADDRESSED IN VIGNETTES

ELEMENTARY VIGNETTES	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	CROSS–CONTENT WORKPLACE
From Research to Oral Production	2, 5, 8–9, 13	6, 8	4, 7–8, 10–12	1, 6–10, 12, 16	2, 7, 10, 12–14, 17	1 [1] 2 [1–3] 3 [1–15] 4 [1–7, 9–11] 5 [3–5]
Fables	6–7, 10	2–3, 6	5–7, 10–12	5, 8–9, 13–14, 32	7	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1–3, 10, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]
Experiments with Air	1, 6–8, 12	1–3, 5–8	1, 4, 6–7, 10–12	4	2, 7, 12	1 [1] 2 [7] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [2–3, 9–10] 5 [7]
Apple Classification	6–8, 12	1–3, 5–8	7, 9–12, 16	4, 15	2, 8, 13	1 [1, 5] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 9–10]
Bear Biographies	1, 7–8, 12	1–3, 5–7, 9	1–7, 10–12	2, 4, 8–9, 12	2, 10, 12	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 10] 4 [2–3, 9]
Multicultural Literature	6–8, 12	2–3, 5–7	1, 3, 7, 9	4–6, 8–9, 12, 14–15	7	1 [1, 3] 3 [1–2, 4, 10] 4 [2–3, 6, 9]
Dinosaur Stories	3, 7–8	2–3, 6–9	1, 7–8, 10	2	2, 8–10	1 [1] 2 [2–3, 5] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 8, 10–11] 4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]
Exploring Tall Tales	1, 4, 7–8, 12	1, 3, 6–8	1–2, 5, 7, 9	1, 3, 6, 8–9, 13–15	8, 10	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8–10] 4 [2, 9]
A Study of Endangered Animals	1, 6–9, 12–13	1–3, 5–7, 9	1, 6–8, 10–13	1, 8, 12, 16	1, 5, 7–9, 12–13	1 [1] 3 [1–3, 8–13] 4 [1–3, 9–10]
Famous African Americans	1, 3, 6–9, 12–13	3, 5–8	1, 6–7, 12–13	1, 6, 8–10, 12, 20	1, 5–6, 12–13	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8, 10, 13–14] 4 [2–3, 6, 9–10]
Phonics in Context	1, 5, 7, 9, 13	2–4, 6–7	4	2, 7, 9	5, 7	1 [1] 3 [1–3, 9, 13] 4 [10]
Using Word Origins	1, 5, 7–8, 12	3–7, 9	4	4, 7, 9	7–8	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1–4, 9–14] 4 [2–3, 5, 10]
Writing Conferences	4, 6–7, 12	3, 5, 7–8, 12	2, 4–5, 7, 9–12, 15	4	7	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1–3, 8, 10, 13, 15] 4 [1, 3, 9]
Short Story and Film	1, 6–8, 12–13	1–3, 5–7	1–4, 7, 10–12, 18	1–2, 7, 9, 12–14	1–2, 6–7, 10–11, 13	1 [1] 3 [1–4, 8] 4 [1–3, 10]

FEATURES OF THE VIGNETTES



VIGNETTES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY ▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼

Short Story and Film: **Cross-Grade Collaborations**
Elementary/Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators: 3.1 [1, 7-8, 10] 3.2 [1, 8] 3.3 [1, 7-8, 10] 3.4 [1, 23, 26, 32] 3.5 [1, 12, 14, 16]

Cross-Content Workplace Indicators: 1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 8-13] 4 [1-3, 6, 9-10]

Ms. Mellody, first-grade teacher, and Mr. Devereaux, eleventh- and twelfth-grade World Literature teacher, decided to have their students work concurrently on multifaceted projects concerning *The Secret of Roan Inish*, the Celtic-based short story and the film that writer/director John Sayles adapted from it. These projects would culminate in a sharing of the projects at the high school.

Mr. Devereaux visited the elementary classroom to introduce *The Secret of Roan Inish* and begin the oral reading of the story. Before beginning to read, he asked the students to think about favorite relatives they liked to see. At the end of the introductory reading, the children responded in a chain of associations—some more appropriate than others—linking the story to their own experiences:

"I visit my grandmother in Florida, and we go to the beach together."

"My family goes to the shore in the summer."

"My brother lives with my father. I miss him."

Focus

Cross-age collaboration provides authentic audiences for communications at both levels.

For primary-grade students, oral reading allows access to texts too difficult for their independent reading and provides models of good literary language.

Possible Assessments:

1. Ask high school students to complete survey/response sheets assessing the value and success of the enterprise and commenting on things learned from the experience.
2. Monitor and record notes on the participation of individual high school students in the class discussions.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could this activity be modified for use with literature of other cultures?
2. How can skill building be incorporated into the project?

Extension Activities:

1. The teachers can videotape the viewing/celebratory session for later discussion with each of the classes.
2. Guest speakers, including family members or friends of the students, or members of the community, can be invited to talk about their previous homes in this or other countries.

Resource:

Fry, Rosalie K. (1995). *The Secret of Roan Inish*. New York: Hyperion.

NEW JERSEY LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 1

Identifies content standards and progress indicators addressed in the vignette

Presents a vignette that models instructional strategies for targeting specific standards and indicators

Presents possible methods for observing and assessing student learning and performance

Introduces questions to extend thinking about teaching and learning strategies and results

Identifies related resources that support instruction

Identifies teaching and learning strategies and results

Provides suggestions for extending the instruction and learning targeted in the vignette

Thematic Unit : From Research to Oral Production
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [2, 5, 8–9, 13] 3.2 [6, 8] 3.3 [4, 7–8, 10–12] 3.4 [1, 6–10, 12, 16] 3.5 [2, 7, 10, 12–14, 17]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 2 [1–3] 3 [1–15] 4 [1–7, 9–11] 5 [3–5]**

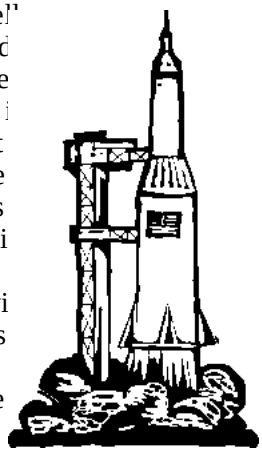
As part of an interdisciplinary thematic unit, students in Ms. Andrews' class researched, prepared for, and took an imaginary trip to Mars. As a culminating activity for the unit, the students presented their research findings and experiences in an "off-Broadway production." The script contained narratives, dramatizations, and songs.

Focus

During the month-long unit, students researched science topics (air/vacuums, weightlessness, propulsion, and botany); health topics (exercise physiology, muscle tone, diet); mathematics topics (distance, speed, weight ratios); and other areas suggested by the students' interests and questions as they prepared for the "voyage." As they learned more about these topics, students wrote journal entries and letters home explaining, for example, how muscles atrophy in a weightless environment and how space travelers have to run regularly on a treadmill to maintain muscle tone.

Individual curriculum goals are enhanced when integrated into a cross-disciplinary unit and extended by student inquiry.

Students explored technology by building a spacecraft from a refrigerator box. They covered the box with Styrofoam™ lunch trays wrapped in aluminum foil and cut plastic for the portholes. As they worked with the aluminum foil, students discussed the properties of heat and friction in space, as wel" aspects of ecology on Earth, a topic stimulated collection of the Styrofoam™ lunch trays. Whe found that they had collected 300 lunch trays i less than a week, several students asked what happened to all the uncollected trays over the course of a school year. Students wrote letters the Superintendent of Schools, expressing thei concerns about the lack of recycling in the schools. Eventually, the Director of Food Servi came to their classroom to explain regulations about washing reusable trays and the limitations elementary schools face when they have no facilities for food preparation.



Students identify unexpected problems and create their own solutions when they engage in complex multimodal activities.

The unit also involved important language arts and social studies outcomes. Students maintained logs of their voyage to, and landing on, Mars. They wrote letters to family members at home describing the trip and the planet and speculating about the possible colonization and planet development. At one point in the unit, the students compared their trip to Mars with the Pilgrims' voyage to the New World, writing about the reasons for the two journeys, the supplies needed, and the similarities and differences in the two contexts.

Student learning increases in classrooms where divergent thinking is encouraged.

In the areas of art and architecture, students researched, designed, and made helmets, surface vehicles, and biodomes out of Tupperware, cardboard, and other supplies. These models were displayed in the classroom and later in the school display case in the main corridor. Ms. Andrews had students study computer images and photographs of the surface of Mars. From these they chose a reasonable landing site and potential locations for homes. In preparation for their voyage to Mars, students also studied the binary number system and discussed the use of the system to receive messages and pictures while in space.

Rich thematic units incorporate activities for different learning styles and provide alternate forums for academic learning.

Finally, they were ready for blastoff and their journey to Mars. While hurtling through space, they computed distances, speed, changes in weight, and estimated time of arrival. They also sampled astronauts' food and kept notes in their learning logs. Upon landing, they made a brief exploration of the surface and examined samples of the terrain. After returning to the ship, students wrote a letter back to a friend on Earth describing what they saw on the surface, what the temperature and gravity were like, their reasons for choosing the landing site, and the plans they had made for extended survival on Mars.

Writing helps students organize their thinking and learning.

Upon their return to Earth, the class agreed that the time spent reading stories about space travel, researching the scientific aspects of the journey in books and CD–ROMs from the school library, and collecting articles and pictures from an electronic encyclopedia and the Internet had been well worth it. They wanted to share the information and their experience with the rest of the school and their parents in an "off-Broadway production."

Reflecting upon experience fosters self-assessment.

Ms. Andrews thought this proposal was a good idea and asked students what information would be important to communicate to their audiences. The students began reviewing their learning logs for topics. As they brainstormed them, Ms. Andrews kept a list of the topics on large sheets taped to the board. Students used these ideas to script their production. They decided it should include some dramatized scenes, journal readings, and songs based on their experience. Ms. Andrews divided the class into teams that were responsible for selecting and writing the materials, constructing props and costumes, and creating commercials for vacations on Mars. During writing workshop, the teams worked on the project, conferring with each other and Ms. Andrews. Ms. Andrews used mini-lessons to teach the conventions of script writing and other skills that students needed to complete their production. She also enlisted the expertise of the art and music teachers, who provided technical and artistic support.

In transforming their learning into a new mode, i.e., performing, students demonstrate their understanding and knowledge.

The afternoon of the performance, Ms. Andrews stood behind a backdrop, giving cues and playing taped music to accompany student singing. During the performance, students took roles in which individuals dramatized some aspect of space travel and the demands of living on Mars. Other students read journal entries about astronaut training, weightlessness, trip duration, and colonization of the planet. As a group, students sang about astronaut heroes of the past and their dreams about the future of

Students appeal to their audience on different levels, from serious presentation to the humorous, while demonstrating their knowledge.

space exploration. Several students presented commercial messages: "Visit Mars. Stay at Aries Modular Motel on the awesome Red Planet." "It will take two years to reach Mars. Use my atomic treadmill to keep your muscles and bones in shape."

The production was well-received by students and parents at both performances, but more to the point, the students felt that all their research had contributed not only to their own learning but to that of their audiences.

Possible Assessments:

1. Videotape one performance so that students can view themselves and discuss the strengths of the presentation as well as places that could be improved.
2. Monitor student progress throughout the unit by observation, response to student letters and journal entries, and student-teacher conferences.
3. Direct students to write a reflective journal entry in which they assess their own success with the project and their reasons for that assessment.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are the benefits of this type of production in terms of student learning? Are the benefits worth the time required?
2. Where does the responsibility for learning rest in this unit? Why?
3. What effect does shifting the audience away from the teacher's desk have on student performance? How does this shift affect the teacher-student dynamic?

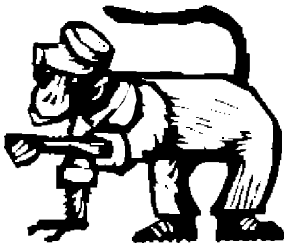
Extension Activities:

1. The Potato Growers of America have an essay contest available for elementary students since potatoes may be grown on Mars. Students could submit entries to the contest.
2. Students could create potato recipe books from Mars.
3. The physical education teacher can adapt some tumbling activities to simulate the effect of gravity on other planets.
4. The music teacher can introduce students to Ferdy Grofe's suite, The Planets.

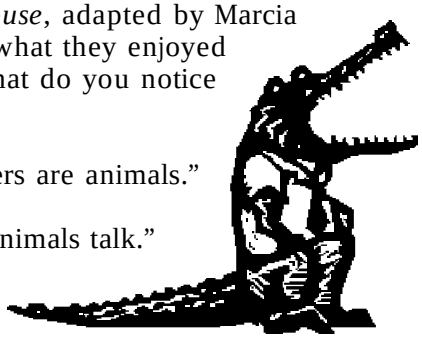
Fables
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [6–7, 10] 3.2 [2–3, 6] 3.3 [5–7, 10–12] 3.4 [5, 8–9, 13–14, 32] 3.5 [7]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]**

Focus



In his fourth-grade class, Mr. Workman introduced a unit on fables. His purpose was to promote student enjoyment of them, develop understanding of their common structure, and provide opportunity for students to create fables of their own. He began the unit by reading *Once a Mouse*, adapted by Marcia Brown. After students shared what they enjoyed about the story, he asked, "What do you notice about this story?"



Jenna answered, "The characters are animals."

Justin added, "Yeah, and the animals talk."

Camille noted, "It's shorter than some other stories you read to us."

Ali said, "My mom used to read those stories to me. They end with some kind of lesson."

Reading is more meaningful when it is connected to personal experience.

Handing out booklets, Mr. Workman said, "These stories are called fables, and this one is *The Monkey and the Crocodile*, adapted by Paul Galdone. I'd like you to read it silently and then tell me how it's like other fables you have read. Think about how the illustrations help you to think about the story."

Use of all textual cues facilitates comprehension.

After reading, students raised their hands. Daphne reported, "This one has animals too, and they talk. I think there's a lesson, or maybe it explains something."

Mr. Workman nodded, "Let's list these as features of the fable." Based on student response, Mr. Workman listed *Title, Setting, Animals/Characters, Dialogue*, and *Lesson* on the board. During discussion, Mr. Workman asked students to explain each element, and the children also talked about how the animals were like people. They noticed that the lesson often came at the end of the fable. Mr. Workman also reminded the children, "Many fables were originally told, not written, and we would not have the fables if they hadn't been recited orally through the generations. Now, of course, we can write them and even type them on computers!"

Knowledge of story grammar helps students to organize their writing.

Then Mr. Workman told the children, "You seem to understand the components of a fable. Let's see if you can create a fable of your own. You can use these components as a checklist, or you can draw or web some ideas, or free-write if you like.

Clear teacher instructions help students understand and successfully complete the task.

Remember that when you write fables, you are using your imagination; but it is also important to include things you know. Choose animals you see each day or situations you've experienced." He assigned students to compose in pairs so that they could brainstorm ideas through discussion.

By moving around the room, the teacher can quickly assess student progress and keep students on task.

As students wrote, the teacher moved from desk to desk, reading segments, making suggestions, asking questions, and interjecting information, such as "Brian, you drew a great cat. What kind of problem would a cat run into? Class, remember that you can use your drawings in your texts. Lisa and Carlos, are you trying to decide how to punctuate conversation? You can use the fiction book you're reading now as a model for when to paragraph and use punctuation marks. Carlos, why don't you see how the author of *The Monkey and the Crocodile* punctuated his dialogue?"

Through teacher guidance, students learn the importance of detail for the reader.

One pair who finished early began to type its fable on the computer. To another pair who finished quickly, Mr. Workman suggested, "Your story tells a lot, but it doesn't help your readers make pictures in their minds. Why don't you try to add more details that show what happened rather than tell what happened. For example, what color is the tortoise in your story?"

Questioning texts enhances critical thinking.

When most of the students finished their initial drafts, Mr. Workman had all the students read their fables aloud. He instructed those listening to respond with a specific detail they liked and one question they had about the story, a procedure they had followed in previous shared reading. Mr. Workman reminded the students, "The questions will help you to focus on specific parts of your fables when you're revising them. What I see of your work today seems really good. I think some of you might want to submit these fables for our winter literary magazine."

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor the quality of peer feedback provided during sharing time.
2. Appoint a class Editorial Board to review student fables.
3. Compare the successive drafts to assess students' ability to revise for meaning and edit for correctness.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what other ways could Mr. Workman have deepened student understanding of fables?
2. How does Mr. Workman structure his class so that he is a coach throughout the writing process?
3. Would a videotaped version of a fable have been equally effective as a prewriting stimulus?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could investigate the use of a particular animal in fables, e.g., the fox and the rooster or the fox and the crow, and identify recurring characteristics of each animal.
2. Invite students to create an anthology of their fables for a wider audience.
3. Have students script the polished fable as a drama to show how the same story can be represented in a different genre.
4. Discuss the tradition of storytelling, and invite a storyteller to visit the school.
5. Discuss ways in which fables are similar to and different from today's animated cartoons.

Using Literate Behaviors to Support Science Writing and Revision: Experiments with Air

Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 6–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–8] 3.3 [1, 4, 6–7, 10–12] 3.4 [4] 3.5 [2, 7, 12]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 2 [7] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [2–3, 9–10] 5 [7]**

Mrs. Jefferson's class was learning about the qualities of air. In this lesson, students performed experiments in class, discussed results, and wrote statements about how they proved that air exists. They also learned to make scientific predictions and to use the scientific method. As a follow-up to their writing, Mrs. Jefferson planned a lesson on editing for spelling and usage.

Focus

The experiment began as Mrs. Jefferson asked the class, "Children, what do you know about air?"

The teacher demonstrates how writing can be used to activate prior knowledge and to record information.

Melissa answered, "Air is all around us," and Tommy added, "My mom told me air is made of oxygen."

Writing their responses on chart paper, Mrs. Jefferson continued, "Is there air in outer space?"

After a long pause, Zakiyyah raised her hand and ventured, "There's no air in space 'cause astronauts need to wear space suits."

"Yes," Mrs. Jefferson responded, "but how do we know there is air here?"

Questions can scaffold and shape learning.

David explained that he knew there was air by blowing into his palm. Mrs. Jefferson then asked students to perform an experiment to test the existence of air in their classroom and discuss the results. She gave each child a plastic bag but cautioned, "We need to be very careful with plastic bags. Make sure you keep them away from your face." She added, "We use bags every day to hold things. Do you think they can hold air? See if you can capture some air in your bag, and tie the bag to keep the air inside." Working in pairs, students trapped air by swinging their bags and securing the ties. Then they pressed on the bags to determine whether air was indeed present.

Experimentation enables students to test and confirm their hypotheses.

After the bag experiments, Mrs. Jefferson placed an inverted glass on top of a bowl of water. As she pushed down on the glass, she tilted it slightly, allowing a bubble to escape to the surface. "What is this bubble?"

Concrete demonstrations clarify abstract concepts.

Anne Marie said, "Air."

"Where did the air come from?" asked Mrs. Jefferson.

"From the glass," replied a few of the students.

"Let's see what happens now," suggested Mrs. Jefferson. She stuffed a paper towel in the bottom of a dry glass and asked what would happen if she inverted this glass and pushed it into the water. Students predicted various results, which she wrote down on a separate sheet of chart paper. Mrs. Jefferson next inverted the glass and pushed it down. The students noticed that the level of water rose. Kim observed that the water level was higher than the paper towel inside the glass.

Initial predictions are accepted and will be confirmed or disproved at the end of the experiment.

June pointed out, "The paper will get wet"; but when Mrs. Jefferson removed the glass, the towel was still dry. June asked, "How did that happen?"

"That's because the towel was in air," said Anne Marie.

The other students agreed. They reviewed their predictions on the chart paper and identified those that were correct.

Mrs. Jefferson next asked the class to recall the steps they went through to test for the existence of air by posing the following questions: What did you do first? What did you do after testing with plastic bags? What happened with the cup? Students returned to pairs and shared one piece of evidence about the existence of air.

Encouraging students to reflect on problem-solving procedures helps them develop metacognitive awareness.

Then Mrs. Jefferson asked them to write one statement on the existence of air in their learning logs. Walking around the room, Mrs. Jefferson found a number of interesting learning log entries. Olivia wrote, "We felled [filled] the bag. Can you fell [feel] the air? Now you know that air is avewear [everywhere] and it looked like a Big Billele [Balloon]." Ricardo noted, "We sok [shook] a bag and we saw air in it. It was grat [great] and I culd't [couldn't] believe my eyes." Mrs. Jefferson told the students they would be using words from their entries as a basis of a spelling lesson the next day.

Allowing students to use transitional spelling gives them access to their rich oral vocabulary.

The following day, Mrs. Jefferson asked students to review their journal entries from the day before and circle any words they had trouble spelling. After walking around the class to assist, Mrs. Jefferson asked the students which of their circled words were important for writing about air. The class selected six words that were important to them. These became the basis for a spelling lesson. One of the words the students chose was *shook*.

By participating in lesson planning, children feel they are contributing to their learning.

"What words have the same ending sound or rhyme with *shook*?" the teacher asked. The students offered *took*, *book*, and *look*. Mrs. Jefferson wrote these words on the board. "Now," she said, "what words have the same beginning sound that you hear in *shook*?" The students suggested *shell*, *ship*, and *shop*. Mrs. Jefferson wrote these words on the board.

Knowledge of spelling patterns is important for independent reading and writing.

"Using what you know about the beginning and ending sounds you heard in *shook*, how would you spell the word?" Several students correctly spelled the word. "Terrific!" said Mrs. Jefferson. "You used what you know about other words to spell a new

Tapping students' prior knowledge of phonics during direct instruction contributes to their literacy development.

one. Write this word in the spelling section of your learning log so you can use it to check your spelling in the future." Mrs. Jefferson continued the spelling lesson with the other five words, again emphasizing patterns and use of prior knowledge.

When the spelling instruction ended, Mrs. Jefferson told the students, "Now let's turn our learning log entries into reports that we can publish on the downstairs bulletin board. I would like you to get into pairs to work on your papers. You should focus on two points as you edit. First, correct the spelling words we covered today. Second, use capital letters to begin each sentence. You can also illustrate your reports with a drawing about your experience." As students worked on their drafts, Mrs. Jefferson went about the room helping individuals and making anecdotal notes about their progress.

Drawing is an important component of writing in the primary years. For some, it functions as a prewriting activity; for others, it functions as a postwriting illustration of ideas.

Possible Assessments:

1. Determine whether students recall the procedures in sequence.
2. Have students conduct a self-directed experiment for further practice with scientific procedures. Examples are (a) putting celery in grape juice to observe absorption, or (b) sprinkling potato or apple slices with lemon juice to prevent discoloration.
3. Review final drafts to determine whether students have successfully used the two editing points identified by the teacher.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what order were the activities structured? What might happen if the order of events were changed or if the approach had invited inquiry?
2. Why did the teacher allow students to write down their own statements about air, rather than dictate a statement to them?
3. What is the effect of pairing students at two critical points during the lesson, rather than asking students to work alone?
4. How does Mrs. Jefferson's attitude toward developmental spelling affect student work?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could observe several experiments to see whether they can identify commonalities in the procedures.
2. Students might write humor or adventure stories using the principles of air and water.
3. Engage students in researching whales or submarines to discover some applications of the principles they have examined.

Writing to Organize Information: Apple Classification
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [6–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–8] 3.3 [7, 9–12, 16] 3.4 [4, 15] 3.5 [2, 8, 13]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1, 5] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 9–10]**

Students in Mrs. Langley's class were learning to keep records of their reactions to sensory experience by tasting a variety of apples and brainstorming for descriptive responses. After reviewing what they had learned about the need for vivid vocabulary, they recorded their observations on charts and in their science journals.

Focus

Mrs. Langley was in the middle of a thematic unit involving close observation and recorded description of sensory data. She modeled the procedure for observing and recording information, using a Rome apple. "First, I'm going to guess what this apple will taste like. I think it will be sweet. Now I'll cut a piece and sample it. The taste is rather bland, flat. The skin is bright red, and the apple is very round." While completing a chart on the board, she said, "I am recording all of this in my science journal. Scientists have to be very careful and detailed in their descriptions. When you write in your journals, be sure to use words that clearly explain your observations."

Learning is facilitated when teachers model desired outcomes.

She then directed her students to work in groups as scientists and to predict, observe, describe, and contrast five different kinds of apples. At their tables, students examined the apples according to the senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound. They discussed their findings with group members and listed adjectives on a chart they had been given for their science journals. On these charts, they identified the apple types and their sensory responses to each one (e.g., taste: sharp, sweet, sour, flat).

Visual arrays, such as charts, help students to organize information.

Mrs. Langley asked questions that enabled members of each group to share their findings with the entire class. Sandra commented, "This Granny Smith pinches the corners of my mouth. It's sour."

Students' vocabulary can be developed through observation and discussion.

Mrs. Langley asked Sandra, "Is it more sour than the MacIntosh?"

Sandra said, "Yes," and her group members agreed.

"Is it the most sour of the apples you've tasted?" Mrs. Langley asked. The group agreed it was. Mrs. Langley then engaged children in a discussion of the adjectives they used. "Is a word like *sour* more descriptive than *good*? Could we say it tastes like lemon drops? How would this help us understand what someone thinks about an apple's taste?" Students brainstormed other descriptive words for the taste, smell, and feel of apples. During this time, they offered metaphoric terms, such as *silky* and *icy*, as well as more explicit comparisons: "This Delicious apple tastes like paper after I tasted the Granny Smith."

Concrete examples by the teacher facilitate students' critical thinking. Her questions encourage students to move toward metaphor and simile.

At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Langley instructed the students to put their charts in their science journals. "On the page across from your chart, I'd like you to write some other reactions to the apples. Which did you like most? Which did you like least? Be sure to explain your reasons." Students wrote in their journals for five minutes while their teacher assisted individual students. She noticed Lance had written, "I thought the Rome apple wud [would] taste good, but it tastes worse than the others." Mrs. Langley commented, "I'm glad you're using a comparative like *worse*, Lance, but do you think that's a good, descriptive word for a scientist?"

Careful teacher questioning can reinforce concepts and develop vocabulary for those who may need more assistance.

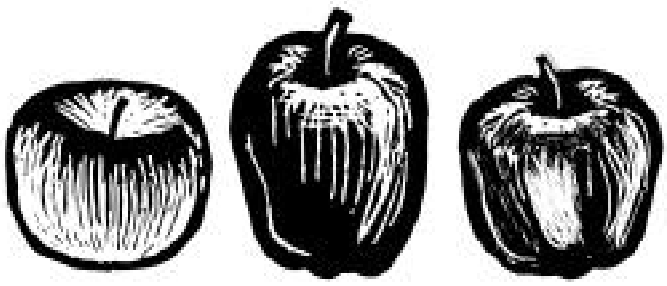
After thinking a moment, Lance answered, "But it's bitter."

"Ah," Mrs. Langley said, "*bitter* is a much better word." Then the class shared their responses.

At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Langley explained to students, "Later today we will study the regions of the United States that these apples come from. Keep your journals for tomorrow when we will look at other experiments we've done this year to see if our predictions and observations are getting better. Soon we will be publishing our best science writing in a book that I will be using with next year's class. That means that each of us will have to revise and edit at least one of our journal entries to get it in shape for publication. We will be working with those entries in our writing workshop when we start to put our own science textbook together."

Motivation increases when learning is placed in authentic and purposeful contexts.

Students' learning is more complete when interconnections are made across disciplines.



Possible Assessments:

1. Examine the lists students have made for uses of descriptive language, such as metaphor and simile.
2. Evaluate students' writing about their favorite apples and the reasons for their choices.
3. Review successive entries in the science journals for improvement in scientific prediction and observation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does writing their ideas affect the things students say about the apples?
2. What is the purpose of having students work in groups to develop descriptions?
3. What other subjects might be incorporated in this thematic unit on apples?
4. How does hands-on experience with an everyday object like an apple enhance learning for students of varied backgrounds and learning abilities?

Extension Activities:

1. Invite a produce manager from a local supermarket to come to class to discuss the procedures for obtaining, displaying, and selling produce from around the world.
2. Students could write commercials for their favorite apples, incorporating the descriptive words they have written.
3. Students could listen to the folktale, Johnny Appleseed.

Listening in the Writing Response Groups: Bear Biographies

Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 7–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–7, 9] 3.3 [1–7, 10–12] 3.4 [2, 4, 8–9, 12] 3.5 [2, 10, 12]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 10] 4 [2–3, 9]**

Students in Mrs. Oliver's class were working on oral and written language skills in a unit on bears. After studying bears to learn about habitat, diet, migration, and hibernation, these students read several fiction and nonfiction big books about bears. They also brought in their favorite b from home, "interviewed" them, and wrote down important information in their learni logs as preparation for a lesson on writing bear biographies. Children who did not have bears at home had selected from Mrs. Oliver's collection a guest bear who "visited" with them for several days.

Before her students arrived in class, Mrs. Oliver had placed bear paws on the floor of the corridor leading into the classroom. Students entered the room following the paw prints. When they arrived at their desks, students were told to take a moment to write some things they knew about bears. Mrs. Oliver then asked students to share what they had written. As they volunteered their ideas, she wrote each on a felt-backed strip and placed it on the story-board.

Mrs. Oliver pointed to the list of student responses she had listed on the strips. "We know a good deal about bears. I think we can organize this information." She hung four large felt bear paws on the wall. "Your information answers questions about bears: What? Where? How? and When?" On each paw she wrote one of these words. "We need to decide which question each information strip answers. Help me put these strips under the correct paw."

After they organized the information strips, Mrs. Oliver told the children they would be writing biographies about the bears they had brought from home. "You can use this information, and you can go back to the books you have read for more ideas. You can also use your imaginations. Why don't we write one biography together first about a grizzly bear." Mrs. Oliver began by writing students' volunteered sentences on the board: "My bear is dark and large. He is a grizzly bear. He lives in the north woods." As she wrote, she asked children to point to the paw from which they had gotten information or tell where their idea had come from.

Focus

Learning is likely to be more meaningful when students can make personal connections.

Activating students' prior knowledge enriches their ideas for writing.

Classification activities help students to see relationships between ideas.

Students learn to use information from a variety of sources.

"Now we'll begin our individual stories. We will write for fifteen minutes. I will be around to help you with your papers; but first, I'm also going to start writing a story. As we write, let's remember to look at our lists when we need more ideas." She sat at the desk and began writing. When Kenneth asked how to spell *cage*, Mrs. Oliver said, "I'm writing right now, Kenneth. Circle the word, and we'll check for spelling later. This is something everyone can do for troublesome words." Kenneth continued to write. After the class had been writing for seven minutes, Mrs. Oliver circulated to help students, such as Kenneth, with their individual questions and to encourage any students who were having difficulty getting started. She also recorded words students had misspelled but had not circled.

The teacher models the need for sustained concentration during writing.

Ongoing teacher support enables all children to achieve their goals.

At the end of the writing time, Mrs. Oliver divided her class into groups of four to read their stories to each other. Students in each group selected a number from 1 to 4 to indicate the order in which they would read. Mrs. Oliver then brought four students to the middle of the room to fishbowl the sharing procedure for all her students. She reminded them that these were rough drafts and that they could get more ideas from listening to other students read their writing.

The fishbowl demonstration models appropriate reading, listening, and responding behaviors.

First, Peter in the fishbowl group read, "My bear's name is Sparky. He is a brown bear. He eats fish."

Depending on the students' level of development, the teacher might probe the student's response for further elaboration.

Mrs. Oliver asked Veronica what she liked about Peter's story. Veronica answered, "The fish."

Mrs. Oliver responded, "Very good, Veronica. You were listening carefully."

Listening activities can foster critical thinking and improve students' vocabulary.

Kristina read, "My bear is pure white. She is a polar bear. She lives near the north pole."

Peter said, "I like that her bear is *pure white*."

Angela read, "My bear has brown fur. He is sick." Mrs. Oliver asked Angela why she thought her bear was sick. "Because his fur has holes in it." Mrs. Oliver complimented Angela on her original thoughtful observations of her bear and reminded students that they could add additional details to their biographies. After Angela's comment, several children added information to their biographies.

Mrs. Oliver had the other students summarize what they had learned from watching the demonstration group. Then she reminded them, "When you share in your groups, be sure to talk about the things you like in each biography. But be as specific as this group was."

Summarization facilitates students' recall and organization of ideas.

All the students met in groups of four and took turns reading drafts to each other and revising their writing. For instance, several students in one group wrote down additional information after hearing Melissa read, "My bear lives in the zoo. He likes to

swim in cold water." At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Oliver told students to place their papers in their folders in order to have them ready for revision the following day.

The following day, Mrs. Oliver instructed students to work with a partner to add any information they thought a reader would need to know. She also told them to circle any words they thought might be misspelled. Mrs. Oliver walked from pair to pair, asking questions about content, reminding students that some misspelled words were written correctly on the paws taped to the walls, or spelling the word for the child. She recorded the words misspelled by several children so that she could include them in a future spelling lesson. The students then prepared edited final drafts for display in the main corridor of the school.

Peer response is an important part of the writing process.

Teacher-directed spelling lessons based on students' needs are an important part of literacy development.

Possible Assessments:

1. Observe student performance in groups, including students' ability to make use of peer feedback.
2. Evaluate final drafts for completeness of information, correctness of targeted spelling words, and use of developmentally appropriate conventions.
3. Engage students in self-assessment by asking them to talk about their experience of developing bear biographies after listening to others in class.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What is the value of Mrs. Oliver writing with her class? What problems might arise?
2. What role does personal experience play in each child's success with this activity?
3. What effects do the fishbowl activity and peer listening groups have on student performance?

Extension Activities:

1. Students from an upper grade can come to this classroom to discuss those bears that are endangered species.
2. Students can research more bear information with help from the media specialist using the library, books, films, and CD-ROMs.
3. Students can track their bears' habitats and migration habits on a map of the United States or the world.

Reading Inferentially: Multicultural Literature
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [6–8, 12] 3.2 [2–3, 5–7] 3.3 [1, 3, 7, 9] 3.4 [4–6, 8–9, 12, 14–15] 3.5 [7]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1, 3] 3 [1–2, 4, 10] 4 [2–3, 6, 9]**

Dr. Ramos wanted to determine how well her students understood the message of a folktale they were reading in class. Her students would demonstrate their understanding of the story by writing a response patterned upon an important element of the story.

Focus

After reading folktales from around the world, students in Dr. Ramos' class were discussing the qualities of a legend, fictional plot elements, and differences in setting and culture. Dr. Ramos then introduced the next part of the unit by saying, "For the next two weeks, boys and girls, we will be looking at the culture of the first inhabitants of our country. The author of this story calls them 'People of the Plains,' and they are wonderful storytellers. Today we will be reading a story about them called *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* by Tomie dePaola." To introduce the students to the book, she previewed the illustrations and asked for student predictions about the story.

Review of key literary concepts facilitates student learning.

Discussion of similarities and differences within a genre promotes students' ability to compare and contrast.

Use of pictorial clues for predictions encourages students to use all aspects of contextual cues to understand text.

After the students had read the story, Dr. Ramos asked them about the legend. The class discussed what they had learned about the People of the Plains and why the young boy felt unhappy. Then Dr. Ramos said, "Think about our last science project when we adopted a tree. Do you think we could grow trees or flowers from paintbrushes?" Lauren shook her head.

"Why do you say no, Lauren?" asked Dr. Ramon.

"Because we learned that trees grow from seeds."

"That's true in science, but in this story the boy has a gift….What does the word *gift* mean? What kinds of gifts are there?"

The teacher promotes students' inferential reading strategies through scaffolded questioning and discussion.

"The kind you get for your birthday?" Vanessa offered.

"Yes. But is that the kind of gift the boy in this story has?"

Bobby responded, "He can draw real good."

"Yes, Bobby, he can draw very well. He has the gift of drawing, a talent or ability. Now, let's see how well you understand the idea of a gift as it is presented in this story. Boys and girls, I'd like you to think about a gift you have, a special talent or ability, something you do very well, and write about it in your journal. Then, give yourself a name that the People of the Plains might use to express that gift, and tell why the name fits your gift. If you'd like to draw a picture or talk to a partner to get some ideas, that's fine. Sometimes, other people see gifts in us we do not even know we have."

Vocabulary is expanded by the teacher when she supplies synonyms.

By asking students to reflect on their special talents, the teacher promotes their self-esteem and motivation.

Reflecting on one's own learning con-

Students opened their journals and began drawing and writing. A number of them crossed out their first and second choices before settling on a name they thought fit their gift. After a brief period, Dr. Ramon asked students to read the names they had chosen and explain why the name suited their talent or gift. When all the students had contributed, Dr. Ramon said, "Now we'll put these names in our folders so that we can compare them later with the kinds of names we discover in other cultures. But before we leave this topic, I'd like you to write in your journals one thing you learned or one question you have about the story." After a minute or so of writing, Dr. Ramon closed the lesson by calling on students to read what they had written. Some pointed out aspects of the story that related to character or to culture. Some spoke of the vivid detail of the story while others commented on the way it was told. Instead of providing comments, several students asked questions, and Dr. Ramon noted, "Good questions can tell us how much we learn about a story as much as good comments can."

tributes to the development of a habit of inquiry.

Personal responses to literature are varied.

Assessment is ongoing and can be conducted through a variety of formats.

Possible Assessments:

1. Examine the relationship between the name the student has created and the qualities that the student intends to represent in the name.
2. Look at the questions and comments from the last journal entry to gauge student understanding.
3. Have students make a presentation to the class of the names and drawings that represent their talents. Listeners provide constructive feedback on each presentation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What kind of writing activities could precede the reading of this story?
2. How could a teacher use this lesson to create a greater awareness of language, especially metaphor?
3. What kind of response might a teacher make to a student who cannot discover a personal gift?

Extension Activities:

1. Students read similar stories from other cultures and compare various attitudes toward nature.
2. Students can use the names they created as a starting place to design their own legends, using what they have learned about narrative and dialogue. They can illustrate their legends as well.
3. Students compose name poems based on the letters of their gift names, arranged vertically on the page. After each letter, they supply a word that helps elaborate on their gift.

Drum
Roll
Upbeat
Musical
Marching
Everywhere
Rat-a-tat

Synthesizing Information for Composing: Dinosaur Stories
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [3, 7–8] 3.2 [2–3, 6–8, 9] 3.3 [1, 7–8, 10] 3.4 [2] 3.5 [2, 8–10]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 2 [2–3, 5] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 8, 10–11] 4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]**

As part of a unit on dinosaurs, students in Mr. Lawrence's class were brainstorming ideas as prewriting for a story. They used various sources for their ideas, including trade books, library research, computer-generated information, and Dinosaur Fact Sheets they had maintained during their study. The information they gathered became the basis for composing individual stories containing specific details about dinosaurs.

Focus

Mr. Lawrence's classroom displayed posters of dinosaurs and dinosaur big books with vivid illustrations. Mr. Lawrence asked his students to take their Dinosaur Fact Sheets out of their desks. They had spent the previous day getting information about dinosaurs from books and from computer resources, such as *Encarta* and other CD-ROMs. Mr. Lawrence explained to his students that they were about to begin a writing activity using what they know about dinosaurs.

Environments rich in stimuli foster language learning and enhance schema development.

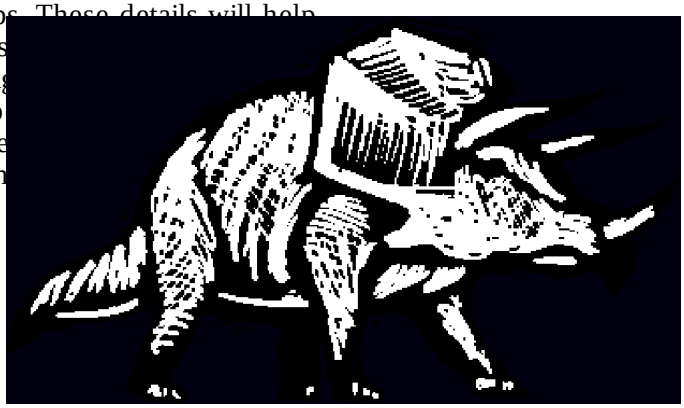
"First, let's listen to a story about dinosaurs." Students gathered on the carpet as Mr. Lawrence read and shared the illustrations for the story *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* by Bernard Most. At the end of the story, the teacher asked for student response to the text.

The story provides students with a model for their own writing.

Ann said, "Each page begins with the words, 'If the dinosaurs came back.' Can I write my story that way?"

Mr. Lawrence pointed out, "Although this author used *if*, we don't have to. You may write what you see when you look out your imaginary windows. Can you imagine looking out your window and seeing dinosaurs moving about the neighborhood? Make sure that you use information about dinosaurs just as Mr. Most did. The length of the brontosaurus is important, especially if it transports large numbers of people. The strength and jaws of the tyrannosaurus are important too. And don't forget the spiky scales of the triceratops. These details will help you get ideas dinosaurs mi were alive to that these are dinosaurs wh people."

The teacher models appropriate usage and promotes critical thinking by elaborating on a student-generated question.



As students began brainstorming ideas and questions, Mr. Lawrence wrote those ideas on a chart: (1) Why are the dinosaurs back? (2) Tell about the good things dinosaurs are doing. (3) Name the type of dinosaur. (4) What physical qualities are important for that dinosaur? (5) Where did you see the dinosaur? (6) Create a title for the story. For the last topic he showed examples of titles from stories they had read, as well as from a current newspaper.

Categorizing students' ideas stimulates student thinking about the topic.

Students began working. Some mapped ideas; some made lists; others began writing their texts while Mr. Lawrence circulated and coached students. He stopped the class after 20 minutes and said, "I'd like to spend the final ten minutes of the lesson discussing your thoughts. You might get a good idea from your classmates, so listen carefully, and write down any details you think you might use. We'll organize them tomorrow."

Students engage in a variety of prewriting activities, rather than using a single format.

For the last ten minutes of class, volunteers read what they had written while the other members of the class listened and sometimes added information to their own drafts. Mr. Lawrence reinforced specific details about any dinosaurs whenever students mentioned them. After each student read, he asked the class, "What do you remember from what we just heard?" in order to emphasize the importance of detail.

Students develop listening comprehension skills while gathering ideas from peers.

As reinforcement for the specific details of their stories, Mr. Lawrence carried the topic over into his lesson on mathematics. "Now, we'll do some math. Using the article on dinosaurs we read yesterday, we'll lay our cord to show the size of some of these dinosaurs. We'll record the measurements in chalk on the playground. After we have marked the lengths and heights of the dinosaurs, we'll talk about those numbers in feet, yards, and meters. This research will give you even more specific detail for your dinosaur stories."

Cross-content study of a topic reinforces and extends learning.

Possible Assessments:

1. Observe the variety and complexity of details written by the students.
2. Provide feedback to students through peer conferences.
3. Read the stories that students subsequently write to determine students' knowledge about dinosaurs.
4. Read the edited stories to determine student knowledge of textual conventions, such as capitalization and punctuation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What other resources could teachers employ in this type of unit?
2. What other prewriting activities could the teacher introduce to help students grasp scientific facts?
3. How could the teacher help students to transform their raw list of ideas into organized text?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students research climate and habitat in the age of dinosaurs and contrast their findings with conditions today.
2. Teach the parts of a newspaper (e.g., editorials, cartoons, advertisements) so that students could write and publish a newspaper on dinosaurs.
3. Use student-made measuring devices to determine the size of dinosaurs and their relation to buildings and vehicles today.

Exploring Tall Tales
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 4, 7–8, 12] 3.2 [1, 3, 6–8] 3.3 [1–2, 5, 7, 9] 3.4 [1, 3, 6, 8–9, 13–15] 3.5 [8, 10]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8–10] 4 [2–9]**

Mr. Hall wanted his students to be able to recognize and identify the features of tall tales and the importance of exaggeration to this genre by recalling and retelling examples from tales they had read.

Focus

Mr. Hall's third-grade class was seated on the carpet in the listening area. Displayed on a table were selections such as *Pecos Bill*, *Paul Bunyan*, *Sally Ann Thunder and Whirlwind Crockett*, and *American Tall Tales*. There was also a listening center with recordings and tapes. Mr. Hall began the lesson by asking students whether they recognized any of the books or other materials on the table. Several students said they did, and he asked, "What do you know about th

Rich classroom environments contribute to the development of literacy.

By organizing a literacy curriculum around literary genres, teachers provide a context for students to learn about the various types of literature and the characteristics of each.

"The characters are not real," said C

"They lived a long time ago," said Luiz.

"They're always bragging," offered Ussuri.

Mr. Hall then asked students to take a minute to write in their learning logs everything they know about "these kinds of stories that we call *tall tales*." He reminded them that their ideas might come from something they read, saw, or heard. After a few minutes, he asked students to stop writing and share their ideas with a partner. Then he introduced *Johnny Appleseed*, a tall tale adapted by Steven Kellogg, and invited students to listen for any features in this story that are like the features for tall tales they mentioned in their learning logs.

When he finished reading, Mr. Hall said to the class, "Ussuri told us that these stories have bragging in them. Did you hear any bragging in *Johnny Appleseed*?" Several students volunteered that nobody could plant that many apple trees in so many places. Mr. Hall said, "That's probably true. So there does seem to be some sort of bragging in this story. Does anyone know another word for *bragging*?"

Vocabulary and concept development are promoted through discussion.

Nicha said, "Isn't this called *exaggeration*?"

Mr. Hall responded, "That is a good word." Then he wrote it on chart paper. Next, he wrote, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!" and asked, "Can anyone tell me what they think this statement means?" Several students shared their ideas. Mr. Hall explained that this is an example of exaggeration that people use every day. "Can anyone give other examples of exaggeration?"

Chris volunteered, "Yeah, my big brother says I exaggerate when I tell him about all the hits I got in my baseball games."

"Good example, Chris," Mr. Hall said. "Can any of you think of more examples in the tall tale you just heard? Think about what was exaggerated in *Johnny Appleseed*." As students shared details from the story that supported their answers, Mr. Hall listed the examples on the chart paper. He then asked, "Why do you think the writer has chosen to use exaggeration?" Some students said it made the story funny and more interesting to read.

Understanding author's purpose contributes to literacy development.

"Now we are going to get into groups to read other tall tales to see whether they also make use of exaggeration. Each group will select a tall tale to read and will prepare a retelling to share with the class. You may choose to use a story map to help you keep track of the details while you are reading. Your retelling should include such story elements as plot, character, and setting, as well as examples of exaggeration in the story. We will add these examples to the list we have just started."

Opportunities for self-selected reading increases motivation.

Critical thinking is developed when children are encouraged to move beyond the analysis of single texts and to explore literary, linguistic, and artistic connections among multiple texts.

The next day, groups read their selected stories and practiced their retellings for presentation to the class. Mr. Hall and the class discussed similarities and differences among the tall tales. He then engaged the class in a discussion of situations in which exaggeration might be used today.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate retellings for accuracy and inclusion of all story elements.
2. Have students self-assess by completing the following sentence stems in their learning logs.

   The tall tale I enjoyed most was_____.

   Something I learned from reading the tall tale was_____.

   One thing I can do better as a reader is_____.
3. Assess students' understanding of exaggeration by having each student finish several open-ended statements as an exaggeration. For example:

   I was so tired this morning I could have _____.

   The cafeteria food is so_____.

   My father is so_____.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could use of performance or visual arts enhance the students' appreciation and understanding of tall tales?
2. How could the strategies used in this lesson on tall tales be used with other literary genres?
3. How else could the teacher elaborate on the concept of exaggeration?

Extension Activities:

1. In their journals, students write about a time they exaggerated and describe the consequences.
2. The teacher and children create a bulletin board with a map of the United States. On it, they locate and label the settings of the tall tales read.
3. Students create a Venn diagram to compare two tall-tale heroes they have read about, or they compare two versions of the same tall tale. How do they compare? Which did they like better and why?
4. Students learn and sing some folk songs, e.g., "John Henry."

Developing Critical Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills through a Study of Endangered Animals

Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 6-9, 12-13] 3.2 [1-3, 5-7, 9] 3.3 [1, 6-8, 10-13] 3.4 [1, 8, 12, 16] 3.5 [1, 5, 7-9, 12-13]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8-13] 4 [1-3, 9-10]**

Learning opportunities can be extended when teachers capitalize on students' interests.

Students in Mrs. Schmitz's class were studying two of Earth's most fragile environments: the Antarctic region and tropical rain forests. The class became interested in further exploring the environment's effects on animal species, particularly endangered species, and adaptability. Students were in the process of researching a chosen endangered animal species for an oral report due the following week. In this lesson, the students apply their acquired knowledge about environmental impacts on animal species to imaginary species.

Focus

First, Mrs. Schmitz gathered her students around her on the floor and asked them to reflect upon what they had learned about their chosen endangered species and to share the reasons why this species became endangered. As students discussed what they had learned, Mrs. Schmitz mapped these ideas on the easel. The map helped students to see patterns and similarities in the causes.

Higher-order thinking is developed when students explore cause-and-effect relationships and draw conclusions.

The teacher explained to the class that they would be working in cooperative groups to draw conclusions about what they had been learning and then in pairs to complete a writing and drawing activity to demonstrate their knowledge. Before assigning students to heterogeneous cooperative groups, the teacher asked students to review their class-generated list of rules for working together in cooperative learning groups. The teacher then assigned students to groups of four and asked each group to discuss and select the most important factors contributing to an animal's endangerment. As group discussions began, the teacher briefly visited each group, listening to ideas and probing students' reasoning. After a short time, each group presented its ideas, which were listed on the easel.

Cooperative grouping is more successful when students and teachers set parameters for working to accomplish a task.

Probative questioning facilitates critical listening and logical thinking.

Engaging in hypothesizing and speculation facilitates development of higher-order thinking skills.

Mrs. Schmitz then explained to the class that next they would be hypothesizing about the vulnerability of some imaginary creatures. Each cooperative group of four students was handed an information sheet with descriptions of six imaginary animals and their individual characteristics. The groups' task was to decide which creature was most endangered and to give reasons for their conclusions. Some children became very animated, presenting their opinions quite persuasively. Others patiently awaited their turns, giving their reasons in a calm and matter-of-fact tone. Group members, however, listened to each other because they realized their group must reach consensus and develop a

Logical thinking is developed when students must provide sound reasons for their opinions.

rationale for their opinion. Mrs. Schmitz touched base with each group during this time, asking key questions to assess progress, guiding discussions, and helping students to solve problems and reach consensus.

After several minutes of group discussion, each group presented its opinion and rationale to the class. As it turned out, most groups had concluded that the same creature had many more risk factors than the other five. Students realized that the more risk factors an animal has, the more vulnerable it is to endangerment. The class then rated the imaginary creatures from most to the least vulnerable.

"Now that you are all experts on endangered species and their risk factors," Mrs. Schmitz told the class, "you are going to pair off to create your own imaginary creature. Your creature will have to show characteristics of either a highly vulnerable, somewhat vulnerable, or adaptable animal."

Students demonstrate their understanding of a concept when they apply it in a new context.

Mrs. Schmitz then gave the students the rest of their instructions. They had to complete five tasks: provide a name for the creature; develop a list of its characteristics; determine its vulnerability rating; draw a picture of the creature in its habitat and show some of its risk factors; and write a descriptive paragraph. She told them to proceed in any order they wished.

The teacher identifies the necessary tasks but allows flexibility in the ways students accomplish them to provide for students' diverse learning styles.

As a culminating activity, students orally shared their creature descriptions and drawings, without divulging their animal's vulnerability rating. Using the student-generated risk-factor chart, the other class members tried to deduce the vulnerability rating of each creature. At the end of this lesson, Mrs. Schmitz asked students to reflect on the new knowledge they had gained from this exercise and to apply that knowledge as they continued working on their research projects.

Students need both teacher validation and self-evaluation to become independent learners.

Recursive learning opportunities strengthen connections between prior and new knowledge.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate descriptive paragraphs for cohesiveness, understanding of concept, and richness of details.
2. Have students determine the vulnerability rating for each creature presented and write a rationale for the rating.
3. Evaluate cooperative group opinions and paired presentations.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does student participation vary depending on the size of the group (whole class, small group, or pair)? How can the teacher encourage each student to be an active participant?
2. How could videos, CD-ROMs, and the Internet be incorporated into this lesson?
3. How does ongoing assessment influence teacher behavior in this lesson?
4. What information concerning student learning is available from the modes (speaking, listening, reading, writing, and drawing) used in this lesson?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students assemble creations into a class book to be shared with other classes and/or parents.
2. Encourage students to create stories or poems based on their creatures.
3. Invite students to investigate some of the causes of harmful environmental conditions.

Resources:

The Needham Science Center. (March, 1993). Vanishing species. Learning, 53—58.

Endangered species: We're all in this together! (1992). National Wildlife Week Educator's Guide, 6—7.

Developing Critical Reading and Notetaking Skills through Researching a Famous African American
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 3, 6–9, 12–13] 3.2 [3, 5–8] 3.3 [1, 6–7, 12–13] 3.4 [1, 6, 8–10, 12, 20] 3.5 [1, 5–6, 12–13]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8, 10, 13–14] 4 [2–3, 6, 9–10]**

Focus

Mr. Klein's class had spent two weeks reading and studying about the life and times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as delving into the history of African Americans in the United States. The students were now ready to do further research on a famous African American of their choice. Through this research, they would learn how to critically read a given resource for information, how to take notes, and how to transcribe those notes into their own words. They would be working in pairs to read a biographical article, identify why this person is remembered, and locate five or six important facts about this person's life, including his or her accomplishments. Each pair would then be responsible for making a jigsaw puzzle out of this information, including one important fact on each puzzle piece. One piece would also be designated as a "picture piece" and would include either a drawing of the person, symbols representing that person, or both. An oral sharing and class assembly of the puzzles would conclude the experience.

Plentiful resources promote student engagement in research.

Mr. Klein's classroom was filled with books, articles, posters, pictures, and magazines with information on famous African Americans. Copies of books, poems, and artwork by famous Black Americans were displayed. Student pairs chose an African American to research. Mr. Klein supplied each pair of students with copies of an article about the pair's chosen person, but students were asked to put their articles aside until they had reviewed critical reading and notetaking procedures.

Teacher modeling of critical reading and thinking skills shows students how to think and attend to important information while reading.

Next came a lesson on locating important information and notetaking. Through a reading/writing think-aloud, Mr. Klein demonstrated for students how to locate main ideas and important facts in an article. A copy of a biographical article on Wilma Rudolph was reproduced on a transparency for the class to view. Mr. Klein began, "I want to find out what Wilma Rudolph's main accomplishments were and important facts that led up to and supported those accomplishments. Let me think about the best way to begin. I'll first read through the entire article to get a general understanding of Wilma Rudolph's life. Then, I'll go back to pick out important information." After reading the short article aloud to his students, Mr. Klein went back to the beginning, rereading and commenting on his thoughts and feelings as he went along. He continued, "I can't imagine the difficulties Wilma faced as a child, being stricken with polio and unable to walk. Wilma must have been very determined to be able to overcome that handicap. I wonder if having polio made her determination to walk and run

even stronger?" Mr. Klein highlighted the sentences on the transparency. In the margin, he drew an arrow and wrote, "Shows strong will and determination."

Students were next asked to participate in a shared reading/writing think-aloud procedure. As students volunteered what they thought was important, Mr. Klein highlighted text and wrote their suggested notations in the margins. By asking for student input, highlighting important information, and making notations, the teacher was demonstrating and involving the students in critical-reading, thinking, and notetaking skills.

While continuing to model, the teacher gradually shifts responsibility for learning to the students.

Once the class had agreed on the subject's main accomplishments and important details, Mr. Klein focused on putting the information in the students' own words on note cards. Again, he used a shared approach. Pointing to the first highlighted piece of information and the "determination" notation written beside it, Mr. Klein wondered aloud how to word that information. With students' input and revisions, the class agreed on the following sentences: "As a child, this famous athlete suffered from polio, a serious and crippling disease. She was very determined to walk without having to wear her leg brace. She worked very hard at it and soon was walking and running without her brace." Mr. Klein recorded these sentences on a piece of chart paper designed to replicate a note card. The class then worked together to complete the notetaking and rewriting task on successive pieces of chart paper until they completed enough sentences for a puzzle. The children now felt confident and ready to work in pairs on their own articles.

The teacher's model encourages students to summarize information in their own words rather than copy from texts.

The pairs of students read their articles and discussed what information to include on note cards. As Mr. Klein walked around the room, he was able to observe the students following his example of highlighting and writing notations. This allowed him to see at a glance students who were proficient at locating important information and those who might need extra guidance. The class continued to put their highlighted information into their own words on note cards.

Pairing students allows them to work independently while being supported by the feedback of a peer.

Once each pair had completed note cards and Mr. Klein had approved them, students wrote their information on the construction paper that would be used for the puzzles. Students created jigsaw puzzles with five pieces of important information and the artwork.

When all puzzles were completed, students presented their information and artwork to the class. Classmates listened, knowing that their next task would require them to retrieve this information. Following the presentations, the pairs cut their sheets into puzzles pieces. Finally, the teacher scrambled the puzzle pieces from three sets, put the students into groups, and gave each group three scrambled puzzles to piece together. Mr. Klein moved among the groups, noting how students discussed the facts and reinforced each other's learning. When the puzzles were reassembled, the students mounted and displayed them in the hallway.

When students know they will have to use information, they will listen attentively to comprehend.

Multimodal activities enhance student learning and tap into different learning styles.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate completed puzzles for quality and clarity of information.
2. Use a rubric for teacher observation of students' understanding and application of critical reading.
3. Direct students to choose three of the African Americans presented in class and write a sentence telling why each is famous.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How might this shared reading/writing think-aloud be used for teaching other skills?
2. How would the outcome have changed if the teacher had merely passed out the articles and asked students to read and summarize the main ideas?
3. What proportion of instructional activities should address diverse learning styles?

Extension Activities:

1. Pairs of students locate and read a second article on their chosen figures in order to discover two new facts to share with the class.
2. Pairs script and perform a dramatic scene from the life of their chosen figures.
3. During the balance of the year, students practice their critical-reading and summarization skills using newspapers and magazine articles about New Jersey. They share their findings with the class during a weekly "New Jersey News" segment.

Resources:

Hudson, Wade, and Wilson Wesley, Valerie. (1988). Book of Black heroes from a to z. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Clemmons, Joan, and Laase, Lois. (1995). Language arts mini-lessons: Step-by-step skill-builders for your classroom. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Phonics in Context
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 5, 7, 9, 13] 3.2 [2-4, 6-7] 3.3 [4] 3.4 [2, 7, 9] 3.5 [5, 7]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1-3, 9, 13] 4 [10]**

Focus

Mrs. Hernandez, a first-grade teacher, read regularly to her children to broaden their opportunities for literature and to provide an adult role model for reading. On occasion she used texts as a springboard for teaching about language skills, such as a lesson on spelling patterns. In this case, she used the literature to teach a phonics lesson.

The teacher's first goal is to ensure that students enjoy literature.

Mrs. Hernandez was reading Nancy Shaw's *Sheep in a Jeep*, which begins:

> *Beep! Beep!*
> *Sheep in a jeep on a hill that's steep.*
> *Uh-oh! The jeep won't go.*
> *Sheep leap to push the jeep.*

During the first reading, students giggled at the silly antics of the sheep as depicted in the pictures and the story itself. After she finished reading, the students talked about the funny parts and asked her to read it again.

As she read it through a second and third time, the students began to chant parts of the text, most often on the words *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep*. Then, Mrs. Hernandez closed the book.

Young students enjoy pattern books with rhyming words, and predictable texts provide opportunity for direct instruction in phonics.

"Wow!" she said. "You are beginning to read this book very quickly. What helps you read this story?"

Kareem replied, "That's easy. The pictures tell the story."

Mrs. Hernandez said, "Using the pictures is one good way, but we've learned to use other kinds of clues on the page too. Can anyone tell me another way to learn the words?"

The teacher acknowledges all the methods used to construct meaning from the text to reinforce use of multiple reading strategies.

Sara said, "I just remembered the words you said."

"That's a good way," said the teacher. "Did you remember all of the words?"

"I remembered some of the words," said Alysha. "I remembered *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep*."

Students can draw on prior knowledge for understanding new phonics principles.

Mrs. Hernandez listed the words *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep* in blue marker on chart paper so that the *e-e-p* at the end of each word lined up vertically.

Because of developmental differences, some students will recognize only the final consonant sound while others will recognize the entire phonogram.

"It's word detective time. Do you see anything that is the same in these words?" asked Mrs. Hernandez. "Write on your chalkboards

what letters these words share. Show your letters to your reading partner. If you have the same letters, then hold your chalkboard in the air." Some students noticed that all of the words ended with the letter *p*; others noticed that all of the words ended with the letters *e-e-p*. Students also said that the words rhymed.

After they shared these observations, Mrs. Hernandez asked Julio to come up and use a red marker to underline the *p* in each word. The class then concurred that indeed all the words ended with the same letter. Mrs. Hernandez said each word aloud asking the students to listen to the end of the word. She asked them whether they remembered what sound the letter *p* stood for at the beginning of many words they had in their word books, a notebook where each student recorded word patterns. After the students identified the *p* sound, she asked the children whether the letter *p* made the same sound at the end of the word. The students agreed that the *p* sound is the same at the beginning and end of the word.

Understanding of sound/symbol relationships is developed through instruction and visual displays.

Sam then came to the easel and used the green marker to underline the *e-e-p* in each word. The students recognized that pattern. Mrs. Hernandez and the class again pronounced each word, and again the class agreed the words shared the same rhyming pattern. Then the class went through the book looking for words that ended in *e-e-p*. They found *steep*, *deep*, *weep*. These words were added to the list.

Sound phonics instruction includes development of active listening skills.

Avi pointed out that *leap* has the same sound as *sheep*, which led the other children to find the words *leap*, and *heap*, and *cheap*. Mrs. Hernandez began a second list pattern on the chart paper and then asked the children how the two lists differed. They noticed the variations in spelling the *eep* sound and concluded that *e-e-p* and *e-a-p* could stand for the same sound. Mrs. Hernandez reminded the students that rhyming words often share the same spelling pattern, but sometimes the same sound can be made with another combination of letters. The students wrote the words in two columns on the same page of their word books. Finally, the class read *Sheep in a Jeep* again with all of the students saying the *eep* and *eap* words.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate student participation in the shared reading.
2. Assess student performance in the peer activity and during review of the spelling pattern.
3. Listen for the students' correct recognition of words that end in eep or eap during reading conference.
4. Look for the use of these words in the students' writing.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why is the teacher's first goal to ensure that students enjoy literature? What would happen if the teacher used every literary experience as the basis for a phonics lesson?
2. Why does the teacher reinforce multiple reading strategies?
3. What other phonics skills did the students need to pronounce the different skills?
4. Why is this a particularly good book for a phonics lesson?

Extension Activities:

1. Students might read Nancy Shaw's other sheep adventures with intricate rhyming schemes: Sheep in a Shop, Sheep on a Ship, Sheep out to Eat, and Sheep Take a Hike.
2. Pairs of students select another rhyming book to prepare and read to the class.
3. The teacher might build upon the students' learning of spelling patterns in this lesson by developing a related vocabulary lesson. Through a word guessing game, students try to identify new words, e.g., keep, creep, weep, deep, steep, and from the text, leap and heap. Students share their experiences.

Using Word Origins to Develop Vocabulary
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators: 3.1 [1, 5, 7-8, 12] 3.2 [3-7, 9] 3.3 [4] 3.4 [4, 7, 9] 3.5 [7-8]

Cross-Content Workplace Indicators: 1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-4, 9-14] 4 [2-3, 5, 10]

Word origins, or etymologies, provide interesting information and can contribute to a deeper understanding of words and their meanings. Etymological information may also provide clues that help with spelling particular words. Ms. Maxwell's fourth-grade students used a section of their learning logs for recording interesting information about words, their meanings, their families, and their spellings. These activities extend students' spelling knowledge and vocabulary.

Focus

Students regularly examined in detail words that appeared in their independent reading, teacher read-alouds, and content area reading. For example, as part of a science unit, the class had studied the history and development of medicine and explored the many words associated with it, such as *medic*, *medicine*, *medical*, *medicinal*, and *medication*.

As an introduction to a new language arts unit about the memoir as a genre, Ms. Maxwell wanted students to explore the meaning of the word. She wrote the word *memoir* on an overhead transparency as students recorded the word in their learning logs.

Learning logs serve as a personal written record of learning that students can review periodically.

"Now, who recognizes this word, *memoir*?" asked Ms. Maxwell.

Sandra raised her hand. "It looks like *memory*, but it's not spelled that way."

Allan added, "But *memory* and *memoir* must be related."

Brainstorming helps to facilitate students' discovery of common elements in word families.

"Okay, let's start with *memory* because that's a word you know," said Ms. Maxwell. "Who can define *memory*?"

"*Memory* is the picture you carry around in your mind," said Marta.

"I like that," remarked Jessica. "Pictures help you remember."

Ms. Maxwell wrote the word *remember* on the transparency.

Alan looked at the three words on the board and observed, "They all have the same syllable, *m-e-m*."

"Okay, that's a good observation. Let's think of other words that have that syllable," the teacher said.

The teacher defers use of the dictionary to allow students to expand their vocabulary before being confined to a single definition.

Eileen wondered whether *memorize* was right. Matt suggested *remembrance*; Luz said *member*; Anuj offered *memorial*; and Ashley provided the word *membrane*. Ms. Maxwell recorded the words in a list under the word *memoir*.

"Now," she said to the students, "look at this list of words and see whether any of them have something in common with the word *memory*."

"A few seem to be about going back in time," concluded Tony.

"Which ones?" asked Ms. Maxwell.

Tony suggested *memorize*, *remembrance*, and *memorial*.

"Good, Tony. So, class, what do you think a *memoir* must be?"

Jill predicted, "You said we would be reading and writing memoirs so it must be a written memory."

Jennifer suggested that the class agree to define *memoir* as "a story that an author writes from a memory she or he has."

Vondre suggested expanding the definition to include "experience and memory."

Ms. Maxwell said, "Why don't we compare our definition with the dictionary definition. Who will do that for us?...All right, Juan, check the dictionary." While checking the dictionary to see how the class's definition compared, Juan recorded the word's origin, or etymology, on the board. He then explained, "*Memoir* comes from a French word, *memoire*, meaning 'memory'."

The dictionary serves to confirm what the children have already discovered and to expand their understanding of the word.

"Let's look again at the list of words we wrote under the word *memoir* on the board. If we're going to leave only the words that have to do with *memory*, which words should I remove?"

Through inductive teaching, the teacher allows students to modify original contributions.

Volunteers suggested that *membrane* and *member* be deleted. Ms. Maxwell said, "Good. That's correct."

Jonathan asked, "If *member* doesn't belong, then why does *remember* belong on the list?"

Student response is used to guide future instructional planning.

Ms. Maxwell responded, "That's a really good question. The word origins are different, and we can research later to explore the differences."

After this discussion, Ms. Maxwell reminded students to copy all the words left on the list and related information in their learning logs. They wrote down information about the word *memoir*, its meaning, its word family, and its spelling. Ms. Maxwell concluded the discussion by asking her students to think about how knowing the origin of *memoir* might help them to develop a richer understanding of the text they would be reading and writing. For homework, Ms. Maxwell assigned her students the task of looking up the word *memento* and bringing one memento to share with the class the next day.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor writing for correct use of word families recorded in their learning logs.
2. Ask students to introduce a word from a "mystery" (new or unfamiliar) word family and lead the class in a brainstorming session to discover the word's relatives and common meaning. Observe students' use of strategies to examine and incorporate new vocabulary.
3. Direct students to write an entry in their learning logs reflecting on how their initial understanding of memoir has changed as a result of their reading and writing experiences. Assess student reflections.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does discussing and examining the etymology of words contribute to students' understanding of and interest in words? To their spelling of words?
2. How does this strategy for vocabulary development compare to other strategies for vocabulary development?
3. What other functions can the learning log serve in the classroom?

Extension Activities:

1. Divide students into groups and assign each group a different region to investigate for that region's contributions to English (e.g., Celtic: glamour; Persian: bazaar; Indian: madras).
2. Discuss with students eponyms—words that enter our language directly from names or places. (Two examples: Levi Strauss was a clothing manufacturer who made strong, long-lasting pants of heavy blue cloth. These pants are now called "levis." The Earl of Sandwich, a nobleman, was the first person to put a piece of meat between two pieces of bread and eat it for dinner. Today, people still like to eat "sandwiches.") Make a list of interesting and widely used eponyms to hang in the classroom.
3. Students review all of their learning log entries for word families to identify five favorites and then discuss the reasons for their choices. Monitor students' discussion for clarity of reasoning.

Resources:

Ashton, C. (1988). Words can tell: A book about our language. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Simon & Schuster.

Klausner, J. (1990). Talk about English: How words travel and change. New York: Crowell.

Terbann, M. (1988). Guppies in tuxedos: Funny eponyms. New York: Clarion.

Writing Conference
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [4, 6-7, 12] 3.2 [3, 5, 7-8, 12] 3.3 [2, 4-5, 7, 9-12, 15] 3.4 [4] 3.5 [7]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 8, 10, 13, 15] 4 [1, 3, 9]**

Mrs. Turso's third-grade class was involved in a writing workshop. Her students were at various stages in their writings. Several were writing first drafts, expanding ideas they had previously listed in the back pages of their journals. Two students were helping a third student edit her revised draft. Mrs. Turso was circulating among her student classroom, talking to students briefly and making notes of their progress. Later she would transfer these notes to a binder where she kept a record for each child. Most of these writing conferences lasted only a minute, with Mrs. Turso asking a specific question based on the student text or making suggestions in response to a student's question.

Focus

As she moved about the room, Mrs. Turso noticed that Brian seemed stuck, unable or unwilling to revise his first draft. He sat staring at his paper tapping his pencil on the desk. She moved an empty student chair next to Brian's in order to hold a longer conference with him about his writing.

Physical behaviors may signal teachers of students' needs for intervention or capacity to work autonomously.

"You've got a really good idea in writing about your piano lessons, Brian. I like the way you describe your teacher's frown, especially the phrase '*scrunching up her eyebrows*'."

"She's always frowning."

"I can see that from the first page. What else does she do?"

Students respond more meaningfully to open-ended questions when they are based on the students' texts.

"Sometimes she reminds me about the way I'm sitting or how I'm holding my hands above the keyboard."

"What songs are you learning to play?"

Teacher coaching enables students to rehearse ideas orally before writing.

"I have to do that Mozart one, the one that sounds like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." That's at one piano. Then she claps real loud, and I have to run to the other piano to play 'Doe, a deer'."

"She makes you run from one piano to the other?"

Brian laughed. "Yup. She says it's good for my posture and my concentration. I think it's weird."

"Don't you think readers would be interested in that part of your story? Remember when Larry wrote about the soccer drills, where the team members had to run backwards between the cones? When he read that part, you laughed. Don't you think your experience is just as interesting?"

By tapping previous literacy experiences, teachers enable students to recognize and value their own ideas.

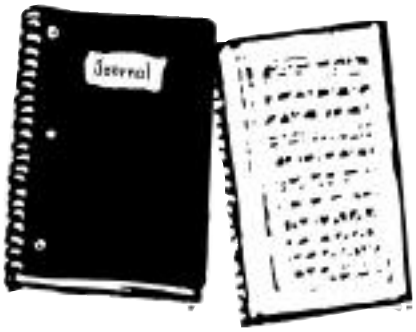
"I don't know. Maybe."

"Well, why don't you add some of the details you've just described to me. If you need more space, do what I did in last week's mini-lesson. Take a second piece of paper, add the details, and use a star to show where you want to insert the new information. You can use an asterisk—remember, that's what we call a star. You can put the asterisk at the end of this paragraph. Then you can put another one on this sheet where you can write about running from piano to piano. When you finish the new section, you can share it with your group and see what they say. Later, if you like, you can arrange the parts in better order on the computer."

Third graders require direct instruction in revision and repeated guidance in the cognitive and physical demands of the task.

Mrs. Turso moved the chair back where it had been, jotted a quick note about Brian's writing, and moved on. Later, while inserting her note in the binder, she noticed that earlier notes indicated that Brian consistently had difficulty providing enough context for outside readers. Now, however, when she looked up, Brian was busy writing on the new sheet of paper. Though he usually avoided expanding his text, Brian seemed to like the humor that the oral retelling of his experience had engendered. That was enough motivation for him to work further on his piano story. Mrs. Turso made another note, "Encourage humor in Brian's stories," and moved back to confer with another student.

Ongoing teacher observation and assessment provide essential information that guides effective teaching and learning.



Possible Assessments:

1. Review observational records periodically to monitor students' progress.
2. Use the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric to evaluate students' texts.
3. Have students share texts in peer response groups and identify an effective feature of each student's writing.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why did the teacher choose to go to the student's desk rather than have the student come to hers?
2. What are some of the things this teacher did to promote effective student writing?
3. What features of this lesson foster critical thinking and independent learning?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students illustrate a scene from their stories.
2. With peer input, students select their favorite pieces for inclusion in a class literary magazine.
3. After a demonstration lesson on webbing or mapping, students select an idea from their journals to web or map as prewriting activity.

Short Story and Film: Cross-Grade Collaborations
Elementary/Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	**3.1 [1, 6-8, 12-13] 3.2 [1-3, 5-7] 3.3 [1-4, 7, 10-12, 18] 3.4 [1-2, 7, 9, 12-14] 3.5 [1-2, 6-7, 10-11, 13]**
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	**1 [1] 3 [1-4, 8] 4 [1-3, 10]**

Focus

Ms. Mellody, first-grade teacher, and Mr. Devereaux, eleventh- and twelfth-grade World Literature teacher, decided to have their students work concurrently on multifaceted projects concerning *The Secret of Roan Inish*, the Celtic-based short story and the film that writer/director John Sayles adapted from it. These projects would culminate in a sharing of the projects at the high school.

Cross-age collaboration provides authentic audiences for communications at both levels.

Mr. Devereaux visited the elementary classroom to introduce *The Secret of Roan Inish* and begin the oral reading of the story. Before beginning to read, he asked the students to think about favorite relatives they liked to see. At the end of the introductory reading, the children responded in a chain of associations—some more appropriate than others—linking the story to their own experiences:

For primary-grade students, oral reading allows access to texts too difficult for their independent reading and provides models of good literary language.

"I visit my grandmother in Florida, and we go to the beach together."

"My family goes to the shore in the summer."

"My brother lives with my father. I miss him."

Since the children would be asked to keep reading logs throughout their school careers, Ms. Mellody and Mr. Devereaux gave the first graders the opportunity to make picture and/or word records as part of their reactions to what they had heard during the reading. These pictures/word records would become the basis for the children's end-of-project chap books and a class banner.

Both the elementary and secondary students shared the same set of texts, the high schoolers reading the text aloud on their own, the elementary students having the text read aloud to them by their teacher and also taking the text home for parental reading and reinforcement. In both cases, the teachers wanted to approximate the tradition of oral storytelling for the students by having them hear the story as it was read aloud.

For secondary students, the opportunity to read aloud on their own connects them to the oral language tradition.

The World Literature students discussed the universal thematic components of the story: the search for a lost home and family and the interaction of the human and natural worlds. Having already met the high-level challenges of *King Lear* and *Ran*, the Japanese film adaptation of the Shakespearean play, the World Literature students recognized the archetypal components of *The Secret of Roan Inish*.

"Reunion with a separated family member—that's one thing they both have in common," offered one student.

"If you subtract the passage of time and the advance of technology, you can see that all these stories are myths," commented another.

"Shakespeare lived only a few hundred miles away from the islands in the story," remarked one particularly geographically astute student.

"Yeah, and if you believe James Tyrone, Sr., Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic anyway," countered the resident class wit/wise guy.

Parental involvement reinforces the home-school connection and should be promoted at every opportunity.

The first-grade children worked on their reading logs both in the classroom and at home since parents and other family members shared the reading responsibilities with the classroom teacher. Each child then created his or her own brochure or chap book based on his or her reading log responses to the story, allowing for individual expression and interpretation. The students also created a group banner illustrating the characters and events in the story, working together with Ms. Mellody and with their art teacher.

The elementary school children were the guests of the high school students at a communal celebration featuring the first graders' banner and chap books, a viewing of the film, and a buffet of ethnic and American food, prepared by Mr. Devereaux and his students. Invitations to individual first graders were answered with thank-you notes drawn or written by the first graders. Then, during the celebration, the high schoolers read the first graders' chap books and wrote back to them on a sheet of paper attached for these messages.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor students' use of their reading logs to record reactions to the oral reading of the text.
2. Evaluate students' ability to work cooperatively in groups to create the class banner.
3. Assess the first graders' understanding of the story based on their chap books.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could this activity be modified for use with literature of other cultures?
2. How can skill building be incorporated into the project?
3. What other kinds of activities lend themselves to cross-grade collaboration?

Extension Activities:

1. The teachers can videotape the viewing/celebratory session for later discussion with each of the classes.
2. Guest speakers, including family members or friends of the students, or members of the community, can be invited to talk about their previous homes in this or other countries.
3. Librarians and other media specialists can be invited to offer their input as to possible choices of material from other cultures and to serve as resource persons for student research in children's ethnic literature, film, and music.
4. Students can write their own myths and share them with another age group, using storytelling techniques.